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OF PLENTIFULS



25 Years Of Plentifuls!

THE PLENTIFUL FOODS Program is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. So the people who work for the program thought it would be appropriate to give it a present—a new symbol, in commemoration of 25 years of growth and achievement as an important cog in America's food marketing system.

This country's food marketing system is a sensitive mechanism. It quickly reflects shifts in supply, from the disasters of crop failure on one hand, to the excessive bounties of bumper crops on the other. And it is equally responsive to variations in consumer demand.

To help the market equilibrium weather seasonal and other fluctuations in supply and demand, the U.S. Department of Agriculture established a market sentinel, the Plentiful Foods Program. Under the direction of USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service, it closely watches the movement of food throughout the country.

When superabundance threatens the equilibrium, the program acts quickly to solve the problem, increasing markets by directing consumer attention to the commodity in question.

Unexpectedly large crops, for example, can flood regional markets, rapidly saturating normal local demand and even causing excessive flow of those products to other parts of the country. Without the corrective help of the Plentiful Foods Program, such market congestion can become aggravated, to the detriment of all concerned.

Without PF to quickly spread the information, the food industry would miss many opportunities to merchandize abundant foods at the reasonable prices which accompany good supplies. Not only would retailers and wholesalers miss sales opportunities, consumers also would miss opportunities for good buys and farmers would often find no market—or much poorer markets—for an abundant crop.

If those crops accumulate in production areas, local prices drop, a burden borne ultimately by the farmer. And if the crop is a perishable such as lettuce, it may spoil before it ever finds a market.

Furthermore, farmers who fail to show fair returns on their crops because of overproduction are quite liable to reduce their planting the following year. Smaller harvests can bring higher prices that might challenge the shoppers' willingness to buy.

The Plentiful Foods Program, with the voluntary help of the food industry, works to avoid these market ups and downs by alerting consumers, as well as the industry, when a food needs merchandising assistance.

Each month, the PF staff and representatives of the C&MS commodity divisions meet in Washington, D.C., to examine the expected supply situation 2 months away. Employing all of their fact-finding services, they compile a list of "plentifuls," foods likely to be in plentiful supply on a national basis. Copies of the list are then flashed to C&MS field offices, where minor changes may be made to reflect regional variations in supply.

Generally, foods designated as plentiful are those in such heavy supply that they are having, or are expected to have, marketing difficulties unless specific action is taken.

The list often includes foods which are in normal seasonal abundance, but which would move more effectively with promotional assistance. Ordinarily, they are commonly used foods that are readily available in wholesale and retail channels and public feeding establishments throughout the country.

Once it has been compiled, the list of plentifuls and related information is published in three bulletins:

- One for food retailers, which contains supply information and merchandising hints;
- One for food wholesalers, which contains supply information and a

resume of the government's purchases for the School Lunch Program and for direct distribution; and

- One for the food service industry, which contains recipes and menu ideas.

These bulletins are issued primarily to stimulate industry's cooperation in promoting the plentiful. All three include suggested dates for special promotions and are distributed well in advance of the month to which they apply. With its vast advertising potential, industry can be instrumental in generating greater movement of the plentiful.

Industry, however, is only one of several sources whose cooperation is important in advising the public of the currently plentiful foods. Bulletins, feature stories, and spot announcements are also sent on request to food trade groups and to radio, television, newspapers, and the other news media.

Food editors, for example, often print the recipes suggested in the bulletins, and many radio broadcasters like to use the brief but pointed spots for their public service announcements.

The method of engaging the merchandising and informational resources of the food industry to stimulate the sale of plentiful commodities is a concept which predates the Plentiful Foods Program by several years.

The concept was first tried under the Stamp Plan launched in 1939.

Food merchants who featured the Plan's "blue-stamp" or surplus foods in their stores often found that sales were increased among all buyers, not just among families participating in the Stamp Plan. Success gave impetus to the idea, and during World War II, it became a guiding principle of new food programs organized under the War Foods Administration.

Food rationing was one such program. It wasn't enough, of course, to train, arm and pack men off to war; they had to be fed and resupplied. Foods were sent abroad in such vast

quantities that the need for certain agricultural commodities threatened to outstrip U.S. production. To limit domestic consumption of these scarce foods, the government instituted a rationing program which worked on a point-buying system: The scarcer the food, the more points it cost.

While food rationing indirectly encouraged people to purchase plentiful items, other programs were begun specifically to divert the nation's attention to non-essential foods, thereby relieving pressure on rationed items. Of these, the Victory Food Selections, started in 1941, and the Foods of the Month Plan, projects of the Abundant Foods Program, are notable for their later influence on the Plentiful Foods Program.

Both emphasized abundant foods. The Food of the Month Plan featured items in normal seasonal supply, while Victory Food Selections were foods requiring emergency promotional assistance. In much the same manner used today, the two programs depended upon the cooperation of industry in advertising the plentiful.

A third, the extensive "No-Point, Lo-Point" campaign, focused attention on foods which were assessed few ration points or none at all. Since such foods were generally abundant, this presented yet another approach to improving the market for plentiful foods.

The principle behind the related campaigns worked so well during the war that afterward, when the WFA was abolished and peacetime agricultural programs were re-established, the Plentiful Foods Program was formed, as a synthesis of the various approaches.

The adjustment to peacetime operation was, for Plentiful Foods, a relatively easy one. The administrative structure remained the same, since it could function in the same manner whether applied to abundance or, as in the war, to shortage.

The greatest difficulty the program

encountered its first several years was finding an effective means of publicizing the plentiful. At first, the Washington office issued a mimeographed memorandum which contained scarcely more than a list of the foods. This attracted little attention among industry and news sources, largely because it did not show the many advantages to be gained by promoting the plentiful.

To correct the problem, PF began publishing the bulletins mentioned earlier, which contained merchandising suggestions and recipes, as well as supply information that was geared to specific trade groups.

The Plentiful Food field office staffs found that dealing personally with members of the food trades enhanced the tradesmen's interest in promoting plentiful. The success of today's program depends heavily upon the close working relationships which employees of the field offices have established with all elements of the food trade.

To engage the interest of the news media, USDA began publishing press releases, feature articles, and spot radio announcements to accompany the release of the monthly plentiful lists. This material has become a favorite source of information for food editors. Their continued use of it has greatly increased the number of consumers who know about and shop for plentiful.

Today, with its earlier difficulties long since ironed out, the Plentiful Foods Program performs a task that is essential to the effectiveness of this country's food marketing system. Its 25th year of service is, therefore, a fitting occasion for an anniversary—and a present.

That present—the new PF symbol—will be showing up soon in newspaper food ads to help consumers spot the plentiful, and help the Plentiful Foods Program continue its mission of moving abundant foods through the market system at prices which are fair to all.



RICE PRODUCTION is reaching new peaks in this country—and Americans are eating more rice.

Per capita consumption last year rose to a record 8 pounds, up 33 percent from 1960 and 63 percent higher than in 1950. Part of this increase is due to the increasing popularity of rice and the many new rice products which have been introduced in recent years.

Rice production in the U.S. reached record levels during the past 2 years, up by some 50 percent since 1959. The U.S. is also the world's largest exporter of rice.

Increased rice consumption and production bring new challenges for the 1970's. One such challenge for the U.S. Department of Agriculture is how to continue providing an efficient nationwide inspection service and standards program to meet the increasing and changing needs of the rice industry.

To meet this challenge, USDA is implementing two programs:

- On May 1, USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service established a Board of Appeals and Review for Rice in New Orleans. It is similar to the Board of Appeals and Review in Beltsville, Md., which provides appeal inspections for other grains and related commodities. Until May 1, the Board in Beltsville also handled final appeal inspections for rice.

- On March 11, Secretary of Agriculture Clifford M. Hardin directed establishment of a Rice Inspection Industry Advisory Committee.

These two steps were taken to:

- Provide improved coordination, supervision, and direction needed to accomplish USDA's rice inspection workload;

- Strengthen USDA's program for the development and revision of the official U.S. rice standards; and,

- Provide a vital link between Government and the various interests representing the rice industry.

meeting the challenge of the rice industry !



By George R. Grange

The Board of Appeals and Review for Rice is the "Supreme Court" of rice grading. Among its many functions, the Board interprets the official U.S. standards for rice, checks the accuracy of test equipment, and supervises rice inspection activities nationwide to assure their uniformity.

The Board's main function, however, is to perform final inspections for buyers or sellers who appeal the grade assigned in the field. These grades are assigned throughout most of the rice-producing area.

The newly established Board of Appeals and Review for Rice is composed of a chairman and two Board members who have a combined total of 68 years of experience in rice inspection work in the South and in California.

The Board was located in New Orleans because it is near the center of the Southern rice production area where three-fourths of all U.S. rice is produced. The remaining one-fourth is grown in California.

The Rice Inspection Industry Advisory Committee is composed of rice producers, millers, exporters, brokers, and processors. USDA's Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Consumer Services, Richard E. Lyng, serves as chairman. Vice chairman is Howard H. Woodworth, Acting Director of C&MS' Grain Division. James W. Coddington, Chief of the Program Analysis Group in the Grain Division, serves as Executive Secretary.

The committee, which meets at the discretion of the chairman, serves solely in an advisory capacity. It confers with appropriate officials of USDA and the rice industry, and makes recommendations concerning the development and implementation of standards and inspection procedures for rice.

The advice given by the committee helps to improve communications between the Government and the rice industry, and to determine the long-range objectives of USDA's rice program.

Both the Rice Board of Appeals and Review and the advisory committee should be valuable instruments to help carry out USDA's continuing program of meeting the complex challenges of a dynamic, growing rice industry. □

The author is Deputy Administrator, Marketing Services, C&MS, USDA.



OKRA vegetable family's southern belle

By Elinore T. Greeley

YOU DON'T HAVE TO be from the South to enjoy okra.

Though okra started out in the South as a vegetable grown in small home gardens, modern processing techniques made it possible for this once-regional delicacy to join the ranks of big-time vegetables. It is grown commercially in a number of States. Among the more important are Georgia, Florida, Texas, Tennessee, Alabama, Louisiana, and California.

To help processors maintain high quality in their products, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service established U.S. grade standards for canned and frozen okra. These standards are used as an aid to quality control throughout the okra processing industry.

Most okra is not only packed according to the grade standards, but it is also processed under USDA inspection. This means that an inspector with the C&MS Fruit and Vegetable Division checks the okra to make sure it meets the requirements of the standards, and issues a certificate stating its quality. The certificate helps processors market the product by help-

ing establish its quality and value. Top quality usually brings a higher price or quicker sale.

When a grader checks the processed okra, he looks for specific factors. U.S. Grade A okra has a good bright color, is tender, and is virtually free from defects and tough fibers. Grade B or C okra is not as uniform in appearance and other characteristics as Grade A. It is best for use in stews, soups, and casseroles.

Frozen okra comes mainly in two styles: whole okra which is very tender and is used chiefly as a side dish, and cut okra which is good for combination recipes.

This tasty vegetable also comes canned, either plain or with the tangy flavor and bright red color of tomatoes. Either way, the grade standards are widely used to determine the quality. Although some canned okra is whole, most of it is of the cut style.

You can look for the U.S. grade shield on frozen okra packages or cans when you shop. If the okra has been packed under continuous inspection, then you may see the USDA shield with the words "Packed Under Continuous Inspection of the U.S. Depart-

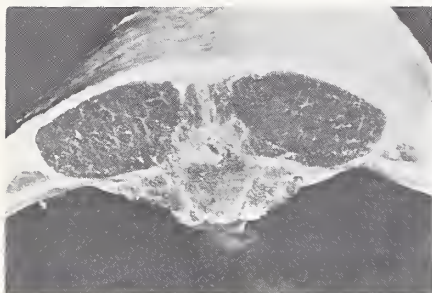
ment of Agriculture", or you may see a shield with the wording, "U.S. Grade A." Whether or not you see the shield, most processed okra each year is packed according to USDA quality standards.

For the food that gourmets consider the "southern belle" of the vegetable family, you can try all kinds of recipes. Okra can be boiled, served with lemon butter, creamed, scalloped, pan fried, or dipped in batter to be deep fat fried.

Because of its flavor and texture, okra is prized by gourmets for the body and taste it gives to stews, soups, and gumbo. Okra lends itself happily to combination with other foods. Try okra with chicken, lamb, or shrimp, or serve it with rice and tomatoes.

And okra packs a bonus; it's low in calories. A half cup serving has only about 38 calories; that's little enough to come back for seconds! □

The author is Head, Standardization Section, Processed Products Standardization and Inspection Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, C&MS, USDA.



Yield Grade 2—cross-section view at the 12th rib. Fat thickness here measures 0.15 inch over the rib chops or ribeye muscle.

BETTER LAMB AT THE retail counter equals better business. It is now more than a year since the U.S. Department of Agriculture's yield grades for lamb went into effect on March 1, 1969. They were the thoroughly researched result of land grant college studies, USDA analysis, and industry request, notably that of the National Wool Growers' Association.

But at the time of this writing, the most current figures of the Livestock Division of USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service show that few lamb carcasses have actually been yield graded. That may change, though.

Arthur W. Stevens, USDA livestock marketing specialist, recently surveyed seven grocery chains, representing about 1,000 stores along the northeast coast. He found retailers there highly satisfied with USDA's beef yield grades and strongly desirous of something that might help them measure carcass yields of retail cuts for lamb.

They were not aware that that "something" already exists—USDA yield grades for lamb that could be uniformly applied nationwide to form a basis for pricing slaughter lambs and carcasses according to "cutability" differences.

USDA lamb yield grades indicate the amount of closely trimmed, boneless, retail cuts that will be prepared from the leg, loin, hotel rack, and shoulder. That is to say, the amount of salable meat available to the consumer.

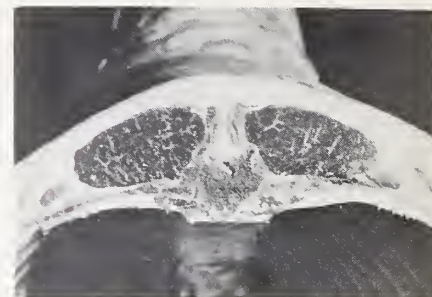
Like the yield grades for beef, the lamb yield grades range from Yield Grade 1, indicating the highest yield of retail cuts, through Yield Grade 5, the lowest.

And like quality grading, which rates the "eatability" of meat, lamb yield grading is a voluntary service of C&MS and paid for by the processor or packer. Yield and quality grading may be used separately or together.

According to the forthcoming booklet, "USDA Yield Grades for Lamb," variations in yield can add up to dollar and cents differences for the retailer:

"By knowing the difference in retail sales value between carcasses of different yield grades . . . a retailer can purchase lamb of any of the five yield grades that will provide him with the greatest margin. This will materially broaden his range of acceptance and increase the supply available to him."

In the illustrations on this page, for example, yield variations between a Grade 2 and a Grade 4 carcass net a difference in retail sales value of \$7.52



Yield Grade 4—cross-section view at the 12th rib. Fat thickness here measures 0.35 inch over the rib chops or ribeye muscle.

per hundred pounds.

Take a look at the foresaddle cut at the 12th rib and the reasons are obvious!

Fat and muscling are the chief factors that go into determining a yield grade. The Yield Grade 2 cross section view on this page was taken from a carcass weighing 47 pounds; the Yield Grade 4 carcass weighed 48 pounds.

What you see in the 12th rib area is the point where external fat is measured over the center of the ribeye muscle.

Note the fat differences between the two grades, despite their almost identical weight and the fact that they are of the same quality grade—Choice.

The thicker fat covering over the Yield Grade 4's ribeye measures 0.35 inch, while the Yield Grade 2 fat thickness is 0.15 inch. The amount of kidney and pelvic fat inside the carcass, and the conformation grade of the legs also are factors which affect the yield grade.

The Yield Grade 2 carcass combines thick muscling with a small amount of fat. Its high yield of retail cuts and high proportion of lean to bone contrasts sharply with the Yield Grade 4's thin muscling, excess fat, and lesser retail value.

You can see, then, as "USDA Yield

Grades for Lamb" stresses, that "lamb carcasses of the same weight and quality grade vary considerably in fatness—and therefore in yield of cuts and value." And because the amount and value of these cuts are the all-important factors in the grocer's case, retailers do indeed "need a means of purchasing which will assure close control of cutability."

And costs!

In these photographs you are looking at a value difference of \$3.76 per hundred pounds for one full yield grade.

And we think that's pretty important.

So do northeastern retailers. In fact, of the seven chains Mr. Stevens contacted, all were anxious to learn more about lamb yield grades and five indicated they would test-run the yield grades immediately.

Because the beef yield grades have been a big help in buying beef, these retailers are anxious to similarly stabilize their lamb costs. They want to control the yield they will realize from a lamb shipment. And they want to provide shoppers with lamb high in cutability and low in excess finish.

The result should be a chain reaction of benefits. Delighted with less wasteful meat, the consumer buys more—and more often. Anxious to maintain this increased business, the retailer pays the packer more for high-yielding carcasses. Now the packer can pay the producer more for meaty lambs and the producer can strive to meet the demand with well-muscled animals.

And that's what we mean by better business in this business of lamb—a bigger, more profitable one for all in the industry. □

Single copies of "USDA Yield Grades for Lamb," MB-52, by Donald D. Johnston, are available from: Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.

HOW TO BUY DRY BEANS, PEAS & LENTILS

IS IT ALL RIGHT TO cook dry beans in a pressure cooker? What's the difference between black-eye beans and black-eye peas? What exactly is a lentil? What do good quality dry split peas look like?

Answers to these and many other questions about these protein-rich products can be found in a new USDA publication, "How to Buy Dry Beans, Peas, and Lentils." This pamphlet describes the various types of these products and gives tips on buying, storing, and preparing them.

Although centuries old in tradition, dry beans, peas, and lentils are modern, up-to-date foods. They are one of today's food bargains, providing a wealth of energy and nutrition at a nominal cost per pound. In fact, they provide more protein for your money than most other foods.

Nearly all dry peas and lentils and about one-third of all dry beans are inspected for quality, either before or after processing, by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service. Retail packages of beans, peas, or lentils seldom carry the Federal grade, but when a grade is shown, it generally is one of the following:

- U.S. No. 1—for dry whole or split peas, lentils, and black-eye peas (beans). (Black-eye peas and black-eye beans are the same thing.)
- U.S. No. 1 Choice Handpicked, or U.S. No. 1 Handpicked—for Great

Northern, pinto, and pea beans.

- U.S. Extra No. 1—for lima beans.

If you don't find the USDA grade on the package, you can be your own "food grader" by looking for the same factors a Federal grader considers. These include:

- Bright, uniform color. Loss of color usually indicates long storage, lack of freshness, and a product that will take longer to cook.

- Uniformity of size. Mixed sizes result in uneven cooking, since smaller beans cook faster than larger ones.

- Visible defects—cracked seed coats, foreign material, and pinholes (caused by insect damage) are signs of lower quality.

"How to Buy Dry Beans, Peas, and Lentils," HG-177, contains color photographs and descriptions to help you choose good-quality dry beans, peas, and lentils. (Lentils are closely related to dry beans.)

The publication also tells you how to use the various types of beans and gives some short cuts for cooking these dry products. For example, some dry beans, including Great Northern, kidney, large lima, black, cranberry, pea (navy), and pinto beans and whole peas, can be pressure cooked in 3-10 minutes, depending on variety.

For a free copy of HG-177, send a post card request to the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Please include your ZIP code. □



It's Been A Century Of Change In Kansas City



By Bill Marshall

OLDTIME CATTLEMEN SAY that if you sit alone on the top rail of the old cattle pens in Kansas City and you listen with your heart, you can hear the crack of the bull-whip that urged along the great trail herds of longhorn cattle that came to market a century ago.

And they say if you try hard, you can hear the rhythmic clanking of the giant drive wheels—and even smell the acrid fumes of the shuddering smokestacks—of the railroad's "iron horse" as it snaked out into cattle country to replace the "cow horse" in pushing beef to market.

But if you listen only with your ears, you hear the whirring tires of huge cattle trucks and the piercing blasts of air horns—the modern sounds of the Kansas City Stockyard, a hundred years old this year.

In a century many things change. The market looks different now than it did then. Methods of marketing have changed. Even the cattle look different. And the Federal-State Market News Service, which came to Kansas City more than a half century ago, has changed too.

The Kansas City Stockyard is only a few years younger than the U.S. Department of Agriculture itself. In 1862, when the USDA was formed,

the only market in Kansas City was a field (on the edge of the present site of the stockyard) where farmers, hunters, trappers, and Indians did informal trading in livestock, grain, and furs.

The stockyard itself really started in 1870, when 5 acres of land were mapped off, 11 cattle pens were built, and a scale was installed. In 1871, the stockyard was expanded to 13½ acres, and the first building (24 by 24 feet made out of rough board) was built to shelter buyers and sellers from the elements.

By the turn of the century, the Kansas City yards had grown to 185 acres paved with brick, with 87 acres protected from the weather. The small building had been replaced by the largest exchange building in the world. And the stockyards had survived three floods, a major fire, and an onslaught of Texas ticks.

Today, the old stockyard has changed even more. Last year, some of the old cattle pens were torn down to make way for a new, modern auction building to meet the needs of today and tomorrow.

In the older "private treaty" method of trading—still done at Kansas City but to a lesser extent than before—a producer consigned his cattle to a

commission firm at the stockyards. Prospective buyers would then visit the pens, examine the cattle, and bargain privately with a salesman representing the seller.

In auction selling, everything is public. Buyers and sellers watch as the cattle to be sold are brought into the auction. An auctioneer keeps up a steady chant as buyers bid on the animals they want.

Market news reporters like myself cover both types of markets. For the private treaty markets, we interview buyers and sellers, view the livestock, and examine stockyard records to get the trend of prices, supply, and demand for each day of trading. For auction markets, we usually sit in right at the sale and keep our own records so we can report on what we actually see.

The market news service, which is conducted by USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service in cooperation with State departments of agriculture, is responsible for seeing that everyone in the marketing system—from buyer to seller—has equal access to the same information.

We report prices, so the producer knows what his cattle will bring; supplies, so buyers know where the cattle are; and demand, so sellers

Nearly 100 years ago, the Kansas City Stockyards (opposite page) was a thriving, bustling collection of open pens. Today's stockyards include a modern auction market (below) as well as the traditional "private treaty" stockyards (bottom right).

know where best to sell their livestock. The 55-year old market news service is constantly changing its reporting methods to provide the best market information to the Nation.

Another change in the Kansas City stockyard over its 100 years—as in other markets across the Nation—has been the change in quality of the cattle sold.

When the stockyard was founded, cattle sold here were flinty, long-horned, long-legged, angular animals generally over 5 years old. Such animals just aren't in demand these days.

The first change from these Spanish and Mexican varieties came in Kansas City in 1883 at the first cattle show at the stockyard. Here, the English breeds outdid the rest and the grand champion was a 2170-pound, 3-year-old Shorthorn.

Even younger stock became popular starting with the 1887 show, when a 2000-pound Angus took champion honors. Today, the 1050-1150-pound yearlings that win modern cattle shows, such as the American Royal in Kansas City, are among the world's highest-quality animals.

In the market news service, we keep track of quality, too. The basis for our price reporting service is the USDA grading system, which is known and used throughout the country. When we report a price, we also report the grade, so a farmer who receives our report can get a better idea of what his own animals will bring on the market.

Prices at the Kansas City market have changed a great deal in a hundred years, too. In 1871, range cattle sold for \$2.25-3.25 per 100 pounds, while in mid-March of this year



USDA Choice steers sold for \$30.50 per 100 pounds.

Change is the only constant factor in livestock marketing. And we in the Federal-State Market News Service—along with the industry people at the Kansas City Stockyard—are ready for the changes of the next hundred years. □

The author is a 20-year veteran of market reporting. Mr. Marshall is presently in charge of the Consumer and Marketing Service's Livestock reporting office at Kansas City, but in the past he has been from Montana to Texas to Washington, D. C., and points in between on reporting assignments.



IT DOESN'T REQUIRE A super-sleuth with a fancy crime lab to determine the real culprit in most cases of illness where meat or poultry is the suspected source. Hardly ever is the villain inadequate inspection procedures or an error by an inspector in the packing plant.

Rather, the leading suspect is someone outside the plant, such as a retailer, caterer or housewife who fails to follow a few basic rules in caring for meat or poultry.

This verdict is based on nearly 2 years of investigations by a special team in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service.

This team, known as the Toxicology Group, is part of the C&MS Consumer Protection Programs. It is called into action whenever meat or poultry is the suspected cause of an outbreak of food-borne illness.

One incident investigated by the team took place at a university, where over 300 students became ill after eating sliced turkey in one of the school's dining halls. An investigation at the plant which slaughtered and shipped the turkeys confirmed that sanitation and inspection requirements were being followed.

Checking further into the manner of handling the turkeys in the dining hall revealed the actual cause.

The turkeys arrived at the dining hall frozen and were properly thawed under refrigeration. After being partially cooked under steam pressure, the birds were baked to finish the cooking process. The turkey was then sliced and held in a warming oven until served. Although the usual holding time in the warming oven was 1 to 2 hours, in this instance the food was held for 5 to 6 hours.

All food, especially poultry, contains some bacteria. Careful handling, however, will keep these bacteria at safe levels. During processing and chilling, some of these microorganisms grow, but thorough cooking by the consumer kills them.

Any surviving bacteria, however, can grow if the product is allowed to remain merely warm after cooking. Even if the microorganisms are all killed during cooking, the product

can become recontaminated by contact with unsanitary utensils, surfaces or hands.

In the university case, bacteria which were not killed in the cooking process multiplied to a harmful level during the excessive time the cooked turkey was kept in the warming oven.

In another case a smoked turkey was shipped via parcel post and then transported in a car trunk to another State. The bird was then cooked by the consumer for only 2 hours, an insufficient amount of time.

Even assuming the bird was properly refrigerated after it left the packing plant, bacteria had ample time to multiply during the mail shipment and in the car trunk. The cooking time was not sufficient to kill the bacteria which had grown.

Another food poisoning incident took place after two groups of people ate food prepared by the same catering firm. Investigations revealed that the meat was wholesome when it left the packing plant.

It was determined, however, that a

meat cutter at the catering firm had a sore on his hand while carving the cooked beef. The beef was then kept at an improper temperature in transit to the banquet. As a result the bacteria from the employee's hand multiplied to a dangerous level.

This case stresses the importance of clean and sanitary hands during the handling of any product, especially cooked meat or poultry.

Likewise, all utensils and surfaces which have touched the raw product should be washed before they come in contact with the cooked product. In this way, any microorganisms present in the raw product, but killed by cooking, are not spread again by the utensils used on the food after it has been cooked.

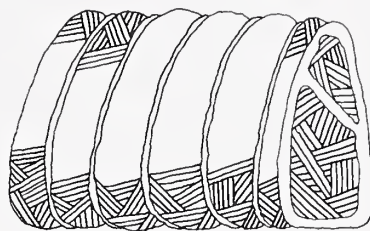
Whereas mishandling of cooked or ready-to-eat foods may result in illness, mishandling of raw foods usually results only in spoilage. To avoid spoilage, consumers should purchase all perishables, especially raw meat or poultry, just before leaving the store so the items can retain the chill maintained in the display cases. Meat and poultry should be taken home quickly and refrigerated, and not left in a warm car during other errands.

Investigations by the Toxicology Group by no means prove that problems are never traced back to the processing plant. A few incidents of improper plant sanitation procedures have required immediate correction. But without a doubt the most common cause of illness was mishandling of the product after it left the plant.

For example, statistics collected by the National Communicable Disease Center, which investigates food-borne illnesses from any source, show that in a typical year, of 124 food-borne disease outbreaks where the cause was known, only nine were caused by the food processor. On the other hand, the fault rested with the food service establishment in 97 cases, and with the consumer at home in 16 cases.

"Meat and Poultry—Care Tips for You" (G-174) is a handy guide to the proper handling of meat and poultry. To obtain single copies, write: Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. □





food inspection checked

By Dr. K. E. Peterson

AN AIR FORCE GENERAL lands a private jet at the Strategic Air Command base in Omaha. Within moments the base commander knows that an "ORI"—operational readiness inspection—is about to be made by the general. It's all part of the program to test the readiness of SAC's defensive ability.

In another part of the city, a similar ORI is taking place. But the U.S. Department of Agriculture conducts this one. It's a "plant review" in one of the 1,200 federally inspected meat and poultry slaughter plants throughout the country.

Although not as secret as SAC's, these plant reviews serve the same basic function: to study the procedures and requirements of programs that protect you.

Inspecting the billions of pounds of wholesome meat and poultry sold in interstate commerce needs constant supervision and leadership. The Federal inspection program of USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service must change with a growing industry, and plant reviews are part of the system designed to anticipate those changes.

Slaughter plant reviewers, who are all veterinarians, look at the inspection program on a national scale and with an objective eye. They make sure inspection requirements are adequate, up-to-date, and uniformly applied.

The USDA reviewer arrives early in the morning—about 5:00 a.m.—

when animals are being inspected before slaughter. The reviewer looks at the plant facilities and the assigned inspector's technique. Lighting, sanitation and safe working conditions are all checked for acceptability in the slaughter area.

The reviewer stays with the inspector all day. Coolers, plant sanitation, slaughter and handling procedures, packaging, inspection records—all the procedures the inspector goes through in a normal day, along with operating conditions of the plant—are examined.

A report based on what the reviewer observed is completed, including a narrative statement of any deficiencies. These reports are then correlated with those on other plants to gain an overall picture of inspection in a specific geographic region. Program deficiencies or needed changes in inspection regulations can be noted and the problems corrected.

This general type of review is conducted throughout the year at a sample of federally inspected plants. Those not previously reviewed, problem plants, and plants getting low scores on earlier reviews have high priority when sample plants are chosen. In 1969, regular reviews in 169 meat and 78 poultry plants were made.

Sometimes special reviews are needed. These are used for work measurement, for studying communications between the plant inspector and his supervisory office, or for re-

viewing packer complaints about inspection policy or personnel. Special reviews were conducted at 14 poultry and 130 meat plants during 1969.

Another function of the reviewer is to spot changes in technology that might affect the inspection program. Many times inspection techniques have to be changed to keep pace with the increased speed and efficiency of the food industry. So the reviewer must notice changing trends in plants before a specific industry practice becomes widespread.

To increase the efficiency of the review program, it is often necessary for a reviewer with a red-meat inspection background to review a poultry plant and vice versa. Due to the distinct nature of each kind of plant, training sessions are held in advance to acquaint these men with the differences between meat and poultry operations.

In 1969, six training sessions were held in poultry plants for reviewers with red-meat backgrounds, and four sessions were held in meat plants for the poultry experts.

C&MS has utilized "ORI" type reviews of meat and poultry plants, in addition to its regular inspection, since 1966. This part of USDA's inspection program helps make it possible for policy planners to maintain "operational readiness" in keeping meat and poultry products safe to eat. □

The author is Assistant Chief, Operations Branch, Slaughter Inspection Division, C&MS, USDA.



milk pool brings fair price

By John R. Hanson

IN OUR MODERN SYSTEM of marketing milk and other dairy products, the farmer no longer meets the consumer face to face as he once did. They are far apart, and today's farmer has no way of knowing how his milk will be used.

He knows it may reach a dinner table in some distant city for drinking. But the farmer also knows that the amount of milk consumers want each day varies and that his particular milk may not be packaged for drinking. Some or all of it may be left on hand at the milk plant after that day's bottling milk orders are filled. This left-over milk is likely to go to a nearby processing plant to be used in making ice cream, cheese, or butter.

The farmer has no control over how his milk will be used once it leaves his farm. In fact, milk from various farms is intermingled after purchase by the handler, and loses its identity with the individual farmer.

Yet, there is a difference in the price milk will bring in the market, keyed to its ultimate use. Milk distributed for fluid use commands a higher price

in the market than milk going into manufactured dairy products.

A "milk pool" ensures that all farmers are paid equitably for their milk delivered to a market, or sold to an individual handler. This "pool" refers to the value of the milk rather than to the milk itself. It is money, not milk that is pooled, to prorate the value of the milk among participating dairy farmers.

The essence of a marketwide pooling plan is payment of a uniform "blend", or average price to all dairy farmers delivering to all dealers in the market, no matter how the milk is used by the particular dealer. A pool can also apply just to milk handled by each dealer individually.

In either case, the pool operates in conjunction with a milk-use classification and pricing system.

Various kinds of pooling arrangements have been used for many years. They were first used in the 1920's by dairy farmer cooperatives, to establish and maintain uniform, marketwide values for milk based on various uses. Later, cooperatives sought and got

the help of government.

Pools have been an integral part of Federal milk marketing orders ever since they were authorized by Congress some 30 years ago.

The Federal milk marketing orders—administered by the Consumer and Marketing Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture—set minimum prices which are the least that milk dealers can pay dairy farmers for their milk.

There are usually two general milk use designations—Class I for all milk used for bottling (fluid) purposes, and Class II for all milk used for manufactured dairy products such as ice cream, butter, and cheese.

This is where the milk pool comes into play. It brings farmers the price benefits of the overall milk usage by all handlers in the entire market, or by one handler only, depending on the type of pool plan.

Here's how this works.

Suppose that three dairy farmers each deliver 100 pounds of milk to a dealer doing business in a Federal milk order market. The dealer sells 200 pounds of the milk for fluid or bottling use, for which the Class I price is \$6.23 a hundred pounds. He uses the other 100 pounds for manufacturing (Class II) for which the per hundred-weight order price is \$4.67.

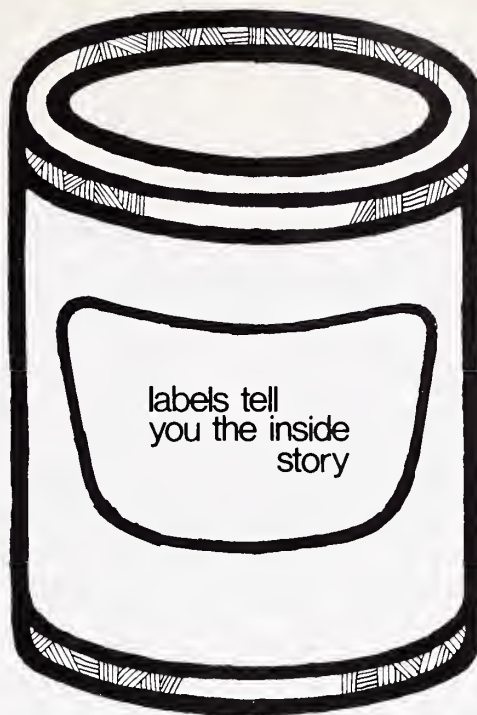
The handler then owes \$12.46 for 200 pounds at \$6.23 a hundredweight, and \$4.67 for 100 pounds at the Class II price. The pool, or total owed by the handler is \$17.13.

Since all three farmers delivered the same amount of milk, they share it equally, each getting \$5.71.

In a real milk order pool, the uniform blend price is announced for milk with 3.5 percent butterfat. The uniform price to the farmers is then adjusted for milk of varying butterfat, and also for milk shipping costs from production to consumption areas.

The road to market is a long one for today's milk. And milk goes into a host of different uses. But because of "pooling" arrangements incorporated into Federal milk marketing orders, farmers are assured basic, equal sharing of pool values, no matter how their milk is used. □

*The author is Deputy Director,
Dairy Division, C&MS, USDA.*



By Violet Crosby

LABEL-READING CAN CUT your food costs.

If you read it right, the label on federally inspected meat and poultry products can be your best friend when you shop.

These products must be checked for composition and their labels checked for truthfulness by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service before they can be produced.

If, for example, you're planning chili as the main dish in your meal, shop for "Chili Con Carne." A federally inspected can of this product must contain at least 40% fresh meat and would be suitable for the main course in your meal. An item labeled "Chili Sauce with Meat" need contain only 6% fresh meat, and you would probably want to supplement it to assure a nutritious meal.

If you're like most consumers, you associate certain characteristics with the product name on a label. To help assure that the product you buy has the characteristics you associate with it, USDA sets standards that describe what a product must contain. Such requirements specify things like the minimum amount of meat, the maximum amount of water, and what other ingredients may be used in the product.

For example, "Beans with Bacon in

Sauce" must have at least 12% bacon, while "Beans with Franks in Sauce" must include at least 20% franks. "Beef Stroganoff" must be made with at least 45% fresh uncooked beef or 30% cooked beef, and at least 10% sour cream or a "gourmet" combination of at least 7.5% sour cream and at least 5% wine. A "Turkey Pot Pie" must contain at least 14% cooked, deboned turkey meat. "Chicken Soup," under Federal inspection, can contain no less than 2% chicken meat.

For some products, such as chopped ham and oleomargarine, complete standards of identity have been established by USDA. These standards require specific ingredients to be present.

"Corned Beef Hash," for example, must contain at least 35% cooked beef, as well as potatoes, curing agents and seasonings. It may be made with certain optional ingredients such as onions, garlic, beef broth, or beef fat. And it may contain no more than 15% fat and 72% moisture. The standard of identity for corned beef hash even specifies the types of potatoes which may be used in it.

Under composition standards such as these, the product name can tell you a great deal about what's inside. But the label can reveal still more helpful information to those who take the time to read it.

It lists the ingredients—starting with

the one weighing the most, and continuing to the one weighing the least; storage or cooking instructions when necessary; the net weight of the product; the packer's or distributor's name and address, and the mark of inspection. In other words, it lets you know what you're paying for.

Packaging, too, comes under the watchful eyes of the Federal inspectors. It can't be deceptive.

Pictures, for example, must truly represent what's inside the package. If any garnishes or serving dishes are shown, the words "serving suggestion" or "suggested serving" must appear with the picture.

For more on how Federal standards and labeling can help you, write for the USDA bulletins, "Meat and Poultry—Standards for You" (G-171) and "Meat and Poultry—Labeled for You" (G-172). You can get single copies free from Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Informed about Federal standards and labeling, you'll be ready to start reading labels to save money on your next trip to the grocery store. □

The author is a home economist, Labels, Standards and Packaging Branch, Technical Services Division, C&MS, USDA.

Plentiful foods for JULY

JULY SHOPPERS WILL be offered a wide variety of their favorite foods, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service's Plentiful Foods List.

The list for July carries always-popular broiler-fryers, honey, fresh summer vegetables, watermelons, fresh peaches and fresh plums, fresh and processed lemons and limes, and rice.

Marketing of broiler-fryers are expected to run 8 percent ahead of last July, so there'll be plenty of these succulent birds for indoor or outdoor eating. The busy bees rang up a record production of 283 million pounds of honey last year.

Summer's fresh vegetables include many items, but the most plentiful will be cabbage, carrots, cucumbers, celery and lettuce for crisp, cool salads.

Who doesn't smile broadly over delicious, lip-smacking watermelon? July food stores will see good shipments of this colorful fruit. And for the long hot days to come, there'll be excellent supplies of fresh and processed lemons and limes to quench the thirst.

Delicious fresh peaches and fresh plums will be another delight for menu-planning housewives and their guests.

Winding up the list is rice, so good to include in nearly any meal. The total supply, around August 1, may be the third largest on record. □

"Project FIND" Seeks Food Stamp Buyers

THE 400-MEMBER SENIOR Citizens Club of Stanislaus County, California—affiliated with the National Council of Senior Citizens—cooperates with the Modesto Office of the Food and Nutrition Service in providing Food Stamp program information to the public.

As part of the club's "Project FIND"—an effort to locate and help the friendless, isolated, needy and disabled—Olaf Beeson and Mrs. Mae Adams voluntarily staff a food stamp

information booth in a Modesto supermarket.

E. G. Hackler, area representative of NCSC, said similar teams man booths about twice a month at food stores throughout the county, a project that began last November at the suggestion of Jerome Raggett, officer-in-charge of the Modesto FNS office.

Hackler estimated that the volunteer teams, and nine "Project FIND" aides who are paid, make an average of 225 food stamp referrals a week. □

New Way to Buy Food Stamps Tested

IN A TEST NOW UNDERWAY in California and Washington State, families on public assistance can request the State to withhold the purchase requirement for food stamps from their welfare checks. The State then mails the food stamps to the household directly.

Social Security laws do not permit food stamp deductions from welfare checks, but the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare is allowing California and Washington to carry out a test of this procedure.

Under this experimental project, as authorized by Title II, Section 1115 of the Social Security Act (which allows for special projects), HEW is letting these two States test out the value of permitting households to authorize the State to withhold the purchase requirement and mail the food stamps directly.

California started the project No-

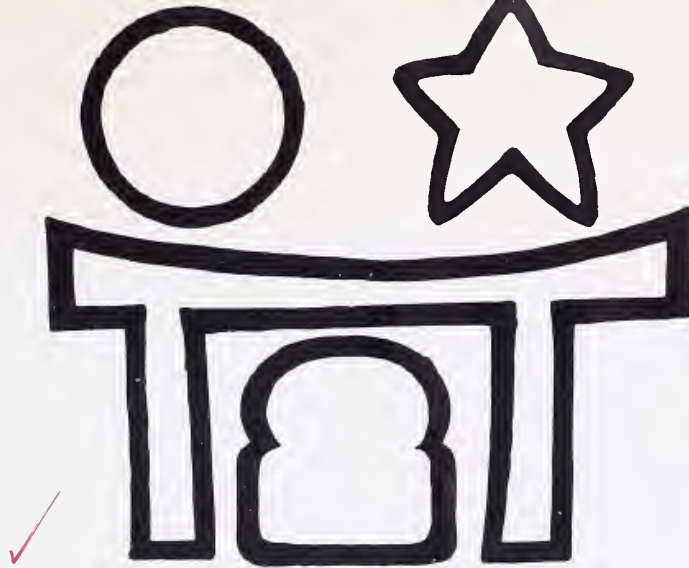
vember 1969, and Washington started January 1970. Ten counties in California are taking part in the experiment and 15 counties in Washington.

Initial reaction to voluntary deductions is good.

A Washington State participant, an elderly widow, commented to Officer-in-Charge Robert McInnis of the Yakima Field Office that she is glad to be able to have her food stamp money deducted from her public assistance check.

To have the food stamps mailed directly to her will allow her to participate each month, she said.

Previously, this participant had to rely on neighbors to take her to the nearest post office to buy a money order and then to the issuance office for food stamps. She did not like to impose on them. Now the postman helps her, by bringing her stamps through the mail. □



Japanese View an American School Lunch

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAMS date back to 1899 in Japan and to 1853 in the United States. As the two nations became increasingly aware of the importance of child nutrition to child development, they encouraged widespread expansion of child food service programs and extra assistance for needy school children.

Successive events in the United States eventually led to the passage of the National School Lunch Act of 1946—and school food service was established as an integral part of the U.S. educational system. In Japan, a similar formal program was initiated after World War II with the help of Allied Forces.

During a recent trip to inspect and evaluate American programs, Mr. Kuniiji Kawakami, Managing Director of the Japanese School Lunch Cooperation, visited the Shreveview Elementary School in Fairfax County, Virginia.

Mrs. Edith Mosher, principal of this 4-year-old elementary school, told Mr. Kawakami that 700 students out of a total enrollment of 803 from grades one through six eat some part of the foods offered in the lunch line.

This varies depending on what food they bring from home. She added that 400 students or 65 percent of all the pupils eat the full lunch.

According to Mrs. Adelaide Neily, Fairfax County Director of Food Service in Public Schools, a complete school lunch costs the student 35¢.

One lunch served to the Shreve-

wood children might include an egg salad sandwich, green beans, strawberry shortcake, and milk. Another meal on the weekly menu could consist of pizza, tossed salad, French dressing, chilled fruit, peanut butter cookies, and milk.

A total of 160 schools in the County serve between 59,128 and 60,000 lunches per school day. This feeds 56 percent of the student body of Fairfax County schools. All of the schools have lunch programs and provide free lunches for needy children. Fifteen participate in the School Breakfast Program (593 free breakfasts are served per school day).

Mr. Kawakami was particularly impressed with the efficiency and availability of well-equipped distribution and storage facilities for school lunch programs in the United States. In Japan, he said, "this needs improvement." Acting as interpreter, the Agricultural Attaché of the Japanese Embassy, Hiroya Sanno, said Japan budgets 50 billion yen (nearly \$140 million) per year for school lunches. The participating children receive five lunches per week, with 20 meals costing the student about \$3.00.

Mr. Sanno said a complete lunch in Japan might include milk, bread, fish (plentiful in Japan) or meat or stew, and a fruit or vegetable. He added that the Japanese School Lunch Cooperation serves about 10,000,000 complete lunches per school day to needy children in Japan.

The school lunch program has had

a noticeable effect on the physical characteristics of the pupils in Japan. For example, the average heights and weights of sixth grade boys and girls increased during the 1951-1965 period.

Twenty-nine percent of Japanese primary and lower secondary schools joined the school lunch program in 1951. By 1965, 83.0 percent participated. And in 1965, the Japanese authorities said 85.3 percent of the pupils participated.

In the current fiscal year ended June 30, 1970, the U.S. Government will likely contribute some \$561 million in food and cash for school lunches. Additionally, State and local governments will contribute \$510 million. The National School Lunch Program enables approximately 75,000 schools throughout the country to serve low-cost lunches to an average of over 20 million children per day in every State, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands.

A suggestion for improving communications with the community was offered to Mr. Kawakami by Mrs. Margaret Bustard, the Shreveview Elementary School cafeteria manager. "Parents are periodically invited to come and eat at the schools, for a slightly higher cost—50¢" she explained. "This helps generate motivation and enthusiasm for the program. Also, it advertises the benefits of joint efforts of the Counties, independent cities, States, and USDA to eliminate hunger and malnutrition." □

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CHILD NUTRITION DIVISION



COVER STORY

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Plentiful Foods Program, an important cog in our food marketing system. Page 2.

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